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International Experience with Operational Safety Assessment Review Teams (OSARTs) Lessons Learned from 14 OSART Performed in France

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1. INTRODUCTION

Next May 2003 will take place the 15th OSART mission in France at Civaux, the latest French NPP

France uses to request for an OSART every year, for more than 10 years: within 6 weeks, 14 out of 19 French NPP sites will have received an OSART

OSART mission's reports are made available to the public, now on Internet (<http://www.asn.gouv.fr/international/osart.asp>)

This presentation will discuss:

- the consequences of OSART on Operator behaviour as regard nuclear safety*
- the effect of an external view on nuclear safety for the Regulator*

2. Specificity to the nuclear industry context in France

A unique specificity to nuclear industry in France:

- *One Regulatory Body for nuclear safety and radiation protection:* **DGSNR**
- *One Technical Support Organisation performing nuclear safety research:* **IPSN**
- *One scientific organisation in charge of nuclear research:* **CEA**
- *One nuclear power reactor operator:* **EDF**
- *One fuel manufacturer and reprocessing operator:* **COGEMA**
- *One power reactor manufacturer:* **FRAMATOME**
- *One radioactive waste management Agency:* **ANDRA**

An important nuclear fleet: 58 PWR (63 GWe - 80% of French electricity)

- *Standardised in only 3 PWR series (34 x 900 MWe, 20 x 1300 MWe & 4 x 1400 MWe)*
- *Advantages in terms of experience feedback - Drawbacks as regard generic issues*

Need for external views on national practices

3. Stimulation of safety issues awareness for the operator

- **The Operator has to assess the safety of its installation (CNS, Art. 9)**
 - *Conduct overall safety assessments (EGS) with its Nuclear Inspectorate*
 - *Call regularly for WANO “Peer Reviews” on its NPP*

... but these assessments remain within the operator
- **OSART reports available to the public: stimulation for the operator**
 - *Generally huge housekeeping operations within the 18 months before an OSART*
 - *Reordering and updating of operating documents*
 - *Extensive verification of compliance with rules and regulation*
 - *Trial to have numerous “good practices” recognised*
- **After the OSART, up to the OSART follow-up visit (18 months later)**
 - *Efforts to resolve recommendations and suggestions issued by the OSART team*

4. Opportunity of an external view on safety for the regulator

The French nuclear context - limited number of players - calls for openness

- *in France:*
 - *Parliamentary supervision (Office for assessment of technological & scientific options)*
 - *High Council for Nuclear Safety and Information*
 - *Local Information Committees (around each NPP)*
- *outside France: mainly the International Atomic Energy Agency*

OSART lessons and benefits after 14 missions in France:

- *No major issues discovered which were not known by the regulator*
- *A lot 'small' findings or ideas or good practices or even inspection methods*
- *With the Exit meetings: Opportunity for the Regulator to speak directly to plant staff*
- *External assessment helps the Regulator:*
 - *to confirm its Competence, Rigor, Independence and Transparency*
 - *to increase public confidence into the Regulator*

5. Conclusion

- The safety of nuclear power plants can only take benefit from multiple and independent assessments
- After 14 OSART missions in France:
 - *no major safety issues discovered,*
 - *a lot of small findings of interest for improving safety*
 - *The operator is stimulated - from 18 months before to 18 months after an OSART - to improve the safety of its plant*
 - *However this stimulus has a tendency to fall down later.*
- International safety reviews increase confidence on national Regulator
- International reviews are not only for operators:
 - *France has requested for 2004 an IAEA TranSAS mission to assess the safety of radioactive transports (the operators and the regulatory framework, including the Regulatory Authority*

5. Conclusion (followed)

- Other opportunities of sharing international experience that could improve regulators efficiency in a different way than IAEA OSART, may also be considered such as :
 - *Performance of cross inspections, involving foreign inspectors,*
 - *Exchange of inspectors between regulators,*
 - *Harmonisation of safety practices, notably through Western European Nuclear Regulator Association (WENRA).*